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RHMFISS/CDR USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GE PRIORITY  
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RHMFISS/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC PRIORITY  
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC PRIORITY  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY  
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TAGS: [NATO](#) [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [AJ](#) [AM](#) [TU](#)  
SUBJECT: ARMENIA AND TURKEY DUKE IT OUT AT NATO

Classified By: DCM John Heffern for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (U) This cable has been delayed due to ongoing transmission difficulties.

12. (C/NF) SUMMARY. Armenian Foreign Minister Edward Nalbandian and Defense Minister Seyran Ohanyan appeared before the North Atlantic Council (NAC) to review the 2009 Assessment of Armenia's Individual Partnership Action Plan (IPAP). During the review the Armenians engaged in tense exchanges with the Turkish Permanent Representative (PermRep) over the draft agreement on reopening the Turkish-Armenian border, the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh (N-K) conflict and whether the events of 1915 should be described as the "Armenian genocide." Ambassador Daalder and other PermReps encouraged Yerevan to prioritize work on its strategic documents, work with international bodies to promote human rights and democratic reforms, and advance negotiations in the framework of the Minsk Group process towards a peaceful resolution to the N-K conflict. END SUMMARY.

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Nagorno-Karabakh  
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13. (C/NF) Armenian Foreign Minister Nalbandian used his May 20 appearance before the North Atlantic Council to point the finger squarely at Azerbaijan as the cause of instability and conflict in the Caucasus, and the reason a solution has not yet been found. He said the parties have been close to an agreement on resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict several times since 2001, but asserted that Azerbaijan had backed away each time. Nalbandian reaffirmed Armenia's adherence to "the norms and principles of international law," namely territorial integrity, self-determination and the non-use of force. The Turkish PermRep responded that in seeking resolution to the N-K conflict, Armenia can not be selective of only some precepts of international law, arguing that Yerevan could not ignore the concept of territorial integrity while favoring other principles such as self-determination.

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The trouble with Turkey  
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14. (C/NF) Nalbandian placed all the blame for problems in

Turkish-Armenian relations on Ankara. He stated that normalization of relations with Turkey had to occur without preconditions, adding that the "ball is in Turkey's court" (Note: Partners seldom use the opportunity of a meeting with the NAC to criticize an Ally, because they risk provoking a show of Allied solidarity in defense of the targeted PermRep. End note.) The Italian PermRep, supported by others, responded that it is probably better to characterize negotiations in a more balanced way in order to promote a positive approach. Nalbandian pushed back, briefing the NAC that Armenia and Turkey have finalized a draft agreement on reopening their border. He said Armenia was ready to immediately sign, ratify and implement this agreement, but the process is stuck because no such decision has been made on the Turkish side. Nalbandian accused Turkey of recently issuing unconstructive statements and clarified that Turkey's opening the border with Armenia should not be viewed just as a favor to Armenia. He noted that the Armenian decision to normalize relations with Turkey required political courage because it was not supported by the entire Armenian population, including the world-wide Diaspora that he said only exists because of the "1915 genocide." In an uncustomary move, the Turkish PermRep asked for the floor at the end of the meeting to prolong discussion on the point of division. He said that unconstructive statements had also been issued by Armenia. He said that the countries must approach this process of normalization with cool-headedness, wisdom and patience. The Turkish PermRep recalled that Ankara had suggested establishing a scholarly joint commission to evaluate "the events of 1915." Nalbandian -- noting that the "Armenian genocide" has been recognized by 25 countries and international organizations -- dismissed the suggestion, adding that the two countries had only agreed to establish a non-academic sub-commission with a mandate to restore confidence between then nations. The discussion ended without resolution or a positive outcome.

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The IPAP Assessment  
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¶5. (C/NF) In an improvement from the 2008 IPAP Assessment, in which Armenia had named Turkey's alliances with other nations (Azerbaijan) as a security threat, Turkey and Armenia collaborated during the 2009 IPAP Assessment negotiations to remove this language. Armenia begrudgingly agreed to accept a new strategic objective proposed by Turkey to revise its Strategic Documents in line with an updated threat assessment. Turkey voiced the hope that the process of updating the threat assessment would not drag on. Allies observed that, although Armenia has demonstrated some progress in its reforms, further concrete action was needed, especially in terms of respect for rule of law, human rights and electoral reform. Allies also expressed disappointment with Armenia's withdrawal from Partnership for Peace (PfP) exercises COOPERATIVE LONGBOW and LANCER in Georgia earlier this month. Defense Minister Ohanyan responded that Armenia thought it best to remain neutral by withdrawing and said Yerevan will compensate for the withdrawal by participating in its first Operational Capabilities Concept (OCC) interoperability evaluation in the fall of 2009. Ohanyan also said that military and defense reforms should be instituted throughout the Caucasus simultaneously, in an open and transparent way, and on the basis of mutual trust.

¶6. (C/NF) Allies thanked Armenia for its contributions to KFOR (70 personnel), and spoke positively of the idea of a potential contribution to the International Assistance Security Force (ISAF).

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Comment  
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¶7. (C/NF) COMMENT: Armenia, while willing to engage NATO through the formal mechanics of partnership, clearly did not help its status with PermReps by provoking a clash with

Turkey in a NATO forum. USNATO will continue to divert any discussion of Nagorno-Karabakh resolution to the Minsk Group process. End Comment.

DAALDER